

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 /091 W  
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R 180345Z AUG 78  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7777  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMCONSUL AUCKLAND POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SUVA 1485

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, NH  
SUBJECT: NEW HEBRIDES SITUATION -- VANUAAKU PARTY APPEARS  
BEFORE COMMITTEE OF 24

REF: A) SUVA 1355, B) SUVA 1394

1. UN ASSESSMENT OF THE WALTER LINI APPEARANCE BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF 24 WAS ONE OF "MINOR IRRITANT". THIS ASSESSMENT WAS BASED PRIMARILY ON THE MODERATE RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE COMMITTEE INCORPORATING CERTAIN AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY FIJI, JUDGED BY UK TO HAVE BEEN HELPFUL. PRIOR TO PASSAGE OF THE RESOLUTION, HOWEVER, THE UK WAS TAKEN ABACK BY THE VIRULENCE OF LINI'S STATEMENT TO THE COMMITTEE WHICH WAS MORE A HARDLINED REITERATION OF PAST COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS THAN HAD BEEN EXPECTED.

2. FRENCH ASSESSMENT ON THE OTHER HAND, AS ECHOED IN SUVA, WAS MARKED BY SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER IRRITATION BY LINI'S  
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STATEMENT AND HIS ATTEMPT TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN UI AND FRANCE BY ALLEGING DIFFERENCES OF APPROACH BETWEEN THE TWO AND FRENCH FOOTDRAGGING. FRENCH WERE PARTICULARLY IRRITATED BY LINI'S ASSOCIATION WITH MR. UREGEI FROM NEW CALEDONIA WHO REPORTEDLY KEPT CIRCLATING IN THE COMMITTEE'S ROOM HANDING OUT ANTI-FRENCH LITERATURE.

3. WHAT APPARENTLY DICTATED LINI'S MILITANT STATEMENT WAS THE REPORT HE MUST HAVE RECEIVED FROM PORT VILA THAT THE VANUAAKU PARTY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD DECIDED TO TAKE A HARDLINE ON ALL THE ISSUES PRESENTLY UNDER NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE VP AND THE GOVERNMENT.

4. ON 4 AUGUST THE EXECUTIVE CONCIL ISSUED A PRESS STATEMENT SIGNED BY KALKOT MATAS KELE AS "INFORMATION OFFICER" WHICH (A) REJECTS THE GOVERNMENT'S OFFER TO THREE CONDOMINIUM MINISTERIAL POSTS; (B) EXPRESSES NO CONFIDENCE IN THE CONDOMINIUM ASSEMBLY BECAUSE OF ITS FAILURE TO DECIDE ON EARLY ELECTIONS AND TO SEPARATE THE ELECTORAL REGISTRATION FROM TIME CONSUMING DEMOGRAPHIC CENSUS; (C) WITHHOLDS ANY GUARANTEE THAT THE VP WILL CONSIDER ITSELF BOUND BY THE CONDOMINIUM GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY THE HONORING OF ANY BUSINESS CONTRACTS AND ASSURING THE FUTURE OF "NON NEW HEBRIDES PERSONNEL EMPLOYED BY THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION"; (D) QUALIFIES THE FRENCH AND BRITISH ADMINISTRATION AS IRRESPONSIBLE; AND (E) ANNOUNCES THAT A DECISION ON THE CURRENT SUSPENSION OF THE PEOPLE'S PRISONAL GOVERNMENT CAN BE TAKEN ONLY BY THE VP COUNCIL OF COMMISSARS AT ITS THIRD SESSION IN OCTOBER (COMPLETE TEXT BEING POUCHED TO EA/PIA.)

5. COMMENT: OUR IMMEDIATE REACTION TO THE MILITANT  
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TONE OF THE VP PRESS STATEMENT IS TO ATTRIBUTE IT TO THE SENTIMENT ALREADY EXPRESSED BY WALTER LINI AND REPORTED IN REFTEL OF SUSPICION OF THE MOTIVES BEHIND THE FRENCH PROPOSITION. ANOTHER EXPLANATION THAT SEEMS TO BE GAINING CURRENCY IS THAT THE VANUAAKU LEADERS NO LONGER FEEL AS CONFIDENT ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE NEW ELECTIONS AS THEY WERE IN THE PAST AND ARE REVERTING TO A POLICY OF CONFRONTATION AND HARDLINE TACTICS DESIGNED TO UNDERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND LEGITIMACY OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. THE VANUAAKU DOUBTS ABOUT THEIR ELECTORAL STRENGTH MAY BE BASED ON THE REPORT OF TWO FRENCH DEMOGRAPHIC CENSUS EXPERTS WHO VISITED SUVA RECENTLY TO SOLICIT UNDP ASSISTANCE IN CARRYING OUT A NEW HEBRIDES CENSUS. AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS IN THE NEW HEBRIDES THE TWO EXPERTS REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT THE NEW HEBRIDES POPULATION MAY BE CONSIDERABLY LOWER THAN THE ESTIMATED 125,000 AND AS LOW AS 80,000 - 85,000. ACCORDING TO FRENCH CHARGE THE EXPERTS BELIEVE THAT THEY COULD COMPLETE THE PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE CENSUS BY THE END OF THE YEAR AND COMPLETE THE CENSUS ITSELF INCLUDING THE SETTING UP OF VITAL STATISTICS RECORDS PRESENTLY LACKING ISSUEANCE OF ID CARDS AND REGISTRATION IN ELECTORAL LISTS BY JULY. THIS

MAY BE AN OPTIMSTIC ESTIMATE OF THE TIME NEEDED FOR THE  
CENSUS (REF B) BUT IF THE NEW HEBRIDES POPULATION IS  
AS LOW AS 85000 IT MAY BE ONLY SLIGHTLY SO. INCIDENTALLY  
ONE OF THE REASONS FOR WHICH THE FRENCH INSIST ON A  
DEMOGRAPHIC CENSUS IS THAT THE UNDP CAN PROVIDE ASSIST-  
ANCE ONLY FOR ACENSUS PROJECT AND NOT FOR REGISTRATION  
IN ELECTORAL LISTS.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**To:** STATE  
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